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Bryant - The Embargo - 1808

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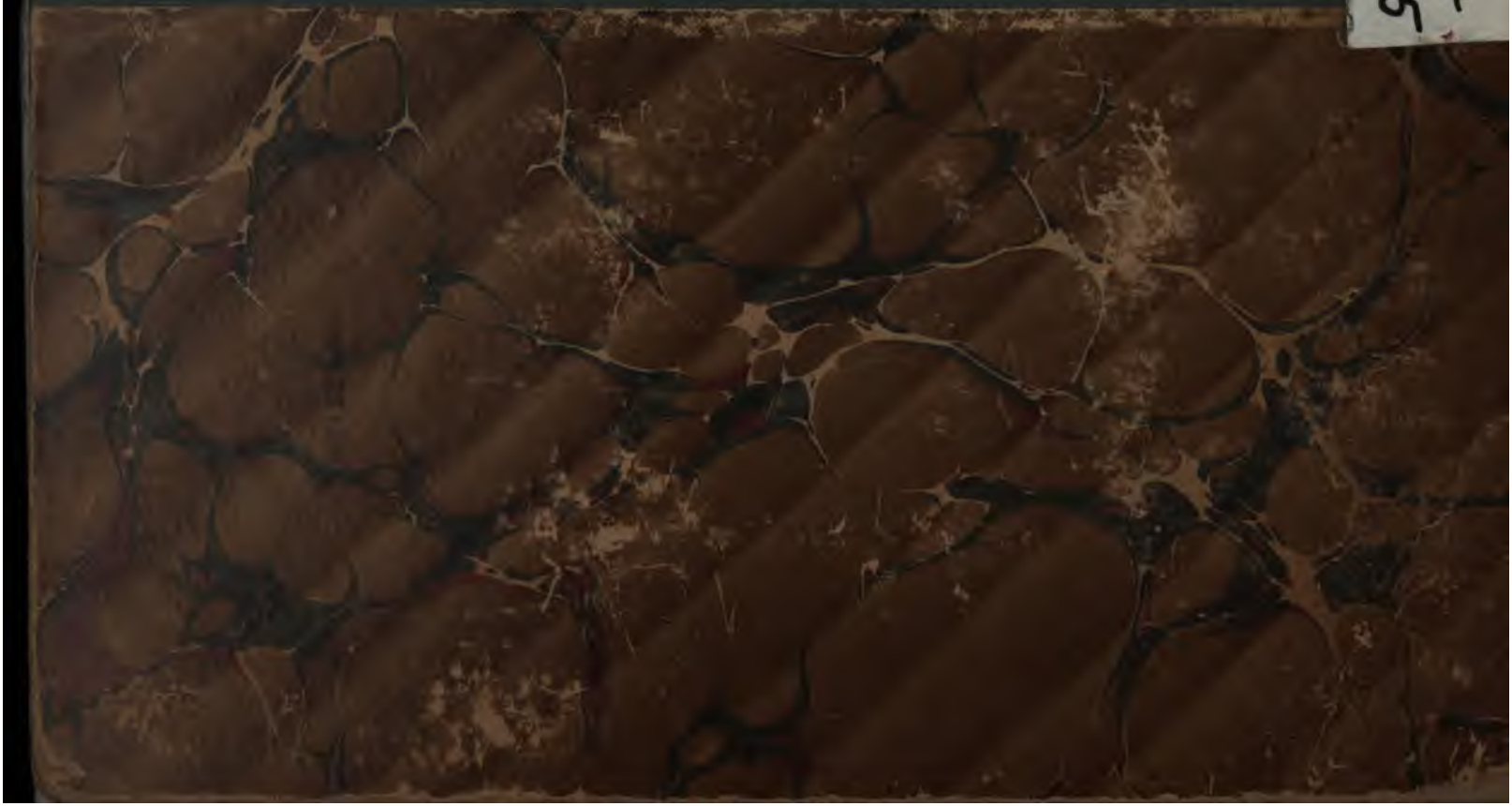

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THE

EMBARGO,

OR

SKETCHES OF THE TIMES

A

SATIRE.

BY A YOUTH OF THIRTEEN.

William Cullen Bryant

BOSTON:

PRINTED FOR THE PURCHASERS.

1808.

The Northern District of Massachusetts, to wit: Be it remembered that on the 29th day of September, A. D. 1808, and in the 33d year of the Independence of the United States of America, William Cullen Bryant, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

The Embargo, or Sketches of the Times. A Satire. By a Youth of Thirteen. William Cullen Bryant.

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."

And also to the Act, entitled "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

Attest, Thomas Dawes, Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

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THE

EMBARGO.

A

SATIRE.

"WHEN private faith and public truſt are ſold,
And traitors barter liberty for gold,
When fell corruption, dark, and deep, like fate,
Saps the foundation of a ſinking ſtate;
Then warmer numbers glow through Satire's page,
And all her ſmiles are darken'd into rage;
Then keener indignation fires her eye,
Then flaſh her lightnings and her thunders fly."

ESSAY ON SATIRE.

LOOK where we will, and in whatever land,
Europe's rich ſoil, or Afric's burning ſand;
Where the wild ſavage hunts his wilder prey,
Or art and ſcience pour their brighteſt day;
The monſter vice appears before our eyes,
In naked impudence or gay diſguiſe.

BUT quit the leſſer game, indignant Muſe,
And to thy country turn thy nobler views.

Ill-fated clime! condemn'd to feel th' extremes
Of a weak ruler's philoſophic dreams;
Driv'n headlong on to ruin's fateful brink,
When will thy Country feel, when will ſhe think?

WAKE Muſe of Satire, in the cauſe of trade,
Thou ſcourge of miſcreants who the laws evade!
Dart thy keen glances, knit thy threat'ning brows,
And hurl thine arrows at fair Commerce's foes!

MUCH injur'd Commerce! 'tis thy falling cauſe,
Which, from obſcurity, a ſtripling draws;
And were his powers but equal to his zeal,
Thy daſtard foes his keen reproach ſhould feel.
Curſe of our Nation, ſource of countleſs woes,
From whoſe dark womb unreckon'd miſery flows;
Th' embargo rages like a ſweeping wind,
Fear low'rs before, and famine ſtalks behind.
What words, oh, Muſe! can paint the mournful ſcene,
The ſaddening ſtreet, the deſolated green;
How hungry labourers leave their toil and ſigh,
And ſorrow droops in each deſponding eye!

SEE the bold ſailor from the ocean torn,
His element, ſink friendleſs and forlorn!
His ſuffering ſpouſe the tear of anguiſh ſhed,
His ſtarving children cry in vain for bread!

THE farmer, ſince ſupporting trade is fled,
Leaves the rude joke, and cheerleſs hangs his head;
Misfortunes fall, an unremitting ſhower,
Debts follow debts, on taxes, taxes pour.

.....

See in his ſtores his hoarded produce rot,
Or ſheriff ſales his profits bring to naught ;
Diſheartening cares in thronging myriads flow,
Till down he ſinks to poverty and woe !

Oh, ye bright pair, the bleſſing of mankind !
Whom time has ſanction'd, and whom fate has join'd,
Commerce, that bears the trident of the main,
And Agriculture, empreſs of the plain ;
Who, hand in hand, and heav'n-directed, go
Diffuſing gladneſs through the world below ;
Whoe'er the wretch, would hurl the flaming brand,
Of dire diſunion, palſied be his hand !
Like 'Cromwell damn'd to everlaſting fame,'
Let unborn ages execrate his name !
Dark is the ſcene, yet darker proſpects threat,
And ills may follow unexperienc'd yet !
Oh Heaven ! defend, as future ſeaſons roll,
This weſtern world from Buonaparte's control,
Preſerve our *Freedom*, and our rights ſecure,
While truth ſubſiſts, and virtue ſhall endure !

Lo, Auſtria crouches to the tyrant's ſtroke,
And Rome's proud ſtates receive his galling yoke ;
Kings fall before him, for his ſway extends
Where'er his all-ſubduing courſe he bends.
See Luſitania's fate, and ſhall we, ſay,
Turn not our feet, that tread the ſelf-ſame way ?

Must we with Belgia, and Helvetia mourn,
In vile ſubjection, abject, and forlorn ?

Our laws laid proſtrate, and our freedom fled,
Our independence, boaſted valour dead ?

We, who ſeven years erſt brav'd Britannia's power,
By Heaven ſupported in the gloomieſt hour ;
For whom our Sages plann'd, our Heroes bled,
Whom WASHINGTON, our pride and glory led ;
Till Heaven, propitious did our efforts crown,
With freedom, commerce, plenty, and renown !

When ſhall this land, ſome courteous angel ſay,
Throw off a weak, and erring ruler's ſway ?
Riſe, injur'd people, vindicate your cauſe !
And prove your love of Liberty and laws ;
Oh wreſt, ſole refuge of a ſinking land,
The ſceptre from the ſlave's imbecile hand !
Oh ne'er conſent, obſequious, to advance
The *willing vaſſal* of imperious France !
Correct that ſuffrage you miſus'd before,
And lift your voice above a Congreſs' roar ?
And thou, the ſcorn of every patriot name,
Thy country's ruin, and her council's ſhame !
Poor ſervile thing ! deriſion of the brave !
Who erſt from Tarleton fled to Carter's cave ;
Thou, who, when menac'd by perfidious Gaul,
Didſt proſtrate to her whiſker'd minion fall ;
And when our caſh her empty bags ſupplied,
Didſt meanly ſtrive the foul diſgrace to hide ;
Go, wretch, reſign the preſidential chair,
Diſcloſe thy ſecret meaſures foul or fair,
Go, ſearch, with curious eye, for horned frogs,
'Mongſt the wild waſtes of Louiſianian bogs ;

Or where Ohio rolls his turbid ſtream,
Dig for huge bones, thy glory and thy theme ;
Go ſcan, Philoſophiſt ; thy ****** charms,
And ſink ſupinely in her ſable arms ;
But quit to abler hands, the helm of ſtate,
Nor image ruin on thy country's fate !

But vain are reaſon, eloquence and art,
And vain the warm effuſions of the heart.
Ev'n while I ſing, ſee, *faction* urge her claim,
Miſlead with falſehood, and with zeal inflame,
Liſt her broad banner, ſpread her empire wide,
And ſtalk triumphant, with a fury's ſtride.
She blows her brazen trump, and at the ſound,
A motley throng obedient flock around ;
A miſt of changing hue o'er all ſhe flings,
And darkneſs perches on her dragon wings !

As Johnſon deep, as Addiſon refin'd,
And ſkill'd to pour conviction o'er the mind,
Oh might ſome Patriot riſe ! the gloom diſpel,
Chaſe errors miſt, and break her magic ſpell !

But vain the wiſh, for hark ! the murmuring meed,
Of hoarſe applauſe, from yonder ſhed proceed ;
Enter, and view the thronging concourſe there,
Intent, with gaping mouth, and ſtupid ſtare,
While in the midſt their ſupple leader ſtands,
Harangues aloud, and flouriſhes his hands ;
To adulation tunes his ſervile throat,
And ſues, ſucceſsful, for each blockhead's vote.

" Oh, were I made a ruler in the land !
Your rights, no man can better underſtand ;
For the dear people, how my bowels yearn !
That *ſuch* may govern, be your chief concern :
Then federal tyranny ſhall flee away,
And *mild democracy* confirm her ſway."
The powerful influence of the knaves addreſs,
In capers droll, the fooliſh dupes confeſs,
With *horrid* ſhouts the affrighted ſky is rent,
And high in air their tatter'd hats are ſent.

But ſhould truth ſhine, diſtinguiſhingly bright,
And lay his falſehoods naked to the ſight ;
He tries new arts to blind their willing eyes,
Feeds with new flatteries, hammers out new lies ;
Exerts his influence, urges all his weight,
To blaſt the laurels of the good and great ;
Till reconfirm'd the fools uphold him ſtill,
Their creed, his *dictum*, and their law, his will.

Now morning riſes, borne on golden wings,
And freſh to toil the waking poſtboy ſprings ;
Lo, trudging on his rawbon'd ſteed, he hies,
Diſperſing Suns, and Chronicles, and Spys ;
Men uninform'd, in rage for ſomething new,
Howe'er unprincipled, howe'er untrue,
Suck in with greedy throat, the gilded pill,
Whoſe fatal ſweetneſs pleaſes but to kill.
Wide, and more wide, the dire contagion flies,
Till half the town is overwhelm'd with lies.
Hence that deluſion, hence that furious zeal,
Which wrong heads cheriſh, and which ho heads feel.

In vain *Italia* boaſts her genial clime,
Her Rome's proud tow'rs, and palaces ſublime;
In vain the hardy Swiſs, inur'd to toil,
Draw ſcant ſubſiſtence from a ſtubborn ſoil;
Both doom'd alike, to feel, in evil hour,
The giant graſp of huge deſpotick power!
Touch not their ſhores, fair freedom is not there,
But far remote, ſhe breathes Columbian air;
Yet here her temple totters to its fall,
Our rulers bowing to audacious Gaul!

Oh, let not prating *Hiſtory* proclaim
The foul diſgrace, the ſcandal to our name!
Write not the deed, my hand! Oh may it lie,
Plung'd deep, and mantled in obſcurity!
Forbid it Heaven! that while true honor reigns,
And ancient valour glows within our veins;
(Our ſtandard juſtice, and our ſhield our God,)
We e'er ſhould tremble at a deſpot's nod!

Oh, may the laurels of unrivall'd fame,
For ever flouriſh round your honour'd name!
Ye, who unthrall'd by prejudice or power,
Determin'd ſtood in that eventful hour;
Tore the dire ſecret from the womb of night,
And bar'd your country's infamy to light!
Go boldly on, the deep laid plot unfold,
Though much is known, yet much remains untold.
But chief to thee our gratitude belongs,
Oh Pickering! who haſt ſcann'd thy country's wrongs,
Whoſe ardent mind, and keen diſcerning eye,
Pierc'd the peep veil of Gallic policy;

And in whoſe well-tim'd labours we admire,
The ſage's wiſdom and the patriot's fire !

Rise then, Columbians ! heed not France's wiles,
Her bullying mandates, her ſeductive ſmiles ;
Send home Napolean's ſlave, and bid him ſay,
No arts [illegible] us, and no threats diſmay ;
Determin'd yet to [illegible] whom we will,
Chooſe our own allies or be neutral ſtill.

Ye merchants, arm ! the pirate Gaul repel,
Your proweſs ſhall the naval triumph ſwell ;
Send the marauders ſhatter'd, whence they came,
And Gallia's cheek ſuffuſe with crimſon ſhame.
But firſt ſelect, our councils to direct,
One whoſe true worth entitles to reſpect ;
In whom concentrates all that men admire,
The ſage's prudence, and the ſoldier's fire ;
Who ſcorns ambition, and the venal tribe,
And neither offers, nor receives a bribe ;
Who firmly guards his country's every right,
And ſhines alike in council or in fight.

Then on ſafe ſeas the merchant's barque ſhall fly,
Our waving flag ſhall kiſs the polar ſky ;
On canvaſs wings our thunders ſhall be borne,
Far to the weſt, or tow'rd the riſing morn ;
Then may we dare a haughty tyrant's rage,
And gain the bleſſings of an unborn age.

'Tis done, behold the cheerful proſpects riſe !
And ſplendid ſcenes the ſtartled eye ſurpriſe ;

Lo! buſy commerce courts the proſperous main;
And peace and plenty glad our ſhores again!
Th' induſtrious ſwain ſees nature ſmile around
His fields with fruit, with flocks, his paſtures crown'd.

Thus in a fallen tree, from ſprouting roots
With ſudden growth, a tender [illegible] ſhoots,
Improves from day to day, delights the eyes
With ſtrength and beauty, ſtatelineſs and ſize,
Puts forth new ſlender arms, and broader leaves,
And high in air, its branching head upheaves.

Turn now our views to Europe's ravag'd plains,
Where murd'rous war, with grim oppreſſion reigns;
There long and loud the ſtorm of battle roars,
With direful portent to our diſtant ſhores;
The regal robber, rages uncontrol'd,
No law reſtrains him, and no faith can hold;
Before his ſteps, lo! cow'ring terror flies,
And pil'd behind him heaps of carnage riſe!
With fraud or force, he ſpreads his iron ſway,
And blood and rapine mark his frightful way!

Thus ſome huge rock of ice, on Greenland's ſhore,
When bound in froſt, the ſurges ceaſe to roar,
Breaks looſen'd from its baſe, with mighty ſweep,
And thunders horrid o'er the frozen deep!

While thus, all Europe rings with his alarms,
Say, ſhall we ruſh, unthinking, to his arms?

[illegible] let undaunted all his fury brave,
Our fluttering flag, in freedom's gale shall wave,
Our guardian Sachem's erriefs shafts shall fly,
And terrors lighten from our eagle's eye!

Here then I ceafe, rewarded, if my fong,
Shall [illegible] mind though guided wrong,
To paufe fro[illegible] his country's ftate,
And lend his aid to [illegible]roaching fate!

THE END.

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